

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY. The 2021-2022 year brought continued and new challenges and successes for the *Milford Health Department (MHD)*, as well as for the *Milford Department of Human Services (DHS)* and *Milford Employment & Training*. As the summer of 2021 began, there was much hope that the end of the pandemic was near with vaccine coverage increasing daily and new COVID-19 cases decreasing. However, as late Summer 2021 approached, new COVID-19 variants emerged—specifically Omicron along with its subvariants that proved to be highly infectious. As such, the MHD continues to be on the front lines of COVID-19 leading the local efforts with contact tracing, mass vaccination for newly eligible populations along with boosters for those who received their primary series, in addition to maintaining daily continuity of routine operations to serve the Milford community.

From July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022, there were 11,671 Milford residents identified as having laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 disease and Milford was saddened by the loss of 21 of its residents to COVID-19. This year the MHD continued contact tracing efforts, informing positive residents of available treatment recommendations, isolation/quarantine procedures, and return to work/school protocols. The MHD also continued the COVID-19 vaccination initiative at a new location—336 Sub Way. In addition to adults, children 6 months and older became eligible for their primary series of COVID-19 vaccine, as well as boosters for certain age groups. Over 1,200 children were vaccinated at MHD clinics this year. In addition, our Homebound vaccination campaign continues as we strive to provide the COVID-19 vaccine to all those requesting the vaccine. While the community health & public health nursing team focused efforts on clinical surveillance and mitigation strategies, the MHD Environmental Health Division followed-up on reports of Food Workers and Child Care employees testing positive for COVID-19 and conducted reviews of 122 COVID-19 facility safety plans. In February 2022, the City received several allocations of COVID-19 at home rapid test kits. While the Emergency Management Division of the Milford Fire Department coordinated distributions directly to Milford residents, the Environmental Health Division worked to deliver supplies of test kits to childcare providers, homebound individuals, public housing, and other at-risk vulnerable residents. Milford Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) and Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteers contributed over 3,000 hours of volunteer time to support both the vaccination and test kit distribution efforts. The work of the MHD was complemented by the work of the DHS and Employment & Training. DHS staff saw a 40% increase in requests for emergency food, rent/mortgage, & utility assistance. Through additional grant funds awarded this past year, DHS staff increased the amount of financial assistance provided directly to Milford residents by approximately 138% from the previous fiscal year.

While the MHD continued to respond to COVID-19, staff successfully maintained and expanded routine public health and human services operations. As the community moved towards “the new normal,” MHD and DHS staff saw an increased demand for services including environmental health routine and temporary event inspections, health office visits to the public health nurses in Milford schools, and forward movement in community health initiatives such as the establishment of Milford Community Opioid Overdose Response (COOR) Collaborative that works to align and de-duplicate community efforts for prevention and treatment of Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) and Substance Use Disorder (SUD). The breadth and depth of the work completed by the MHD and DHS this past year was solely the result of the extraordinary diligence, perseverance, and commitment of every single MHD staff member working on behalf of the residents of Milford.

Future Initiatives. Over 2 ½ years into the COVID-19 pandemic, it is clear the road ahead for the MHD and DHS will be longer as COVID-19 remains a part of the infectious disease landscape. Additionally, additional infectious diseases that may require monitoring and response by the MHD are emerging such as Monkeypox and Parechovirus. MHD staff continues to monitor these emerging diseases, new variants of COVID-19 with increased transmissibility, as well as prepare for and expand vaccine initiatives including potential need for additional, new boosters in the future. The MHD, DHS, and Employment & Training staff will continue to move through the anticipated and unanticipated tasks over the coming year with strong, coordinated, consistent planning, response, and recovery strategies to protect and promote the health of all Milford residents.

Environmental Health Division

The Milford Environmental Health Division (MEHD) protects public health and safety through the enforcement of laws, ordinances, and regulations and promotes environmental health through education of the general public and the regulated community. Program activities are designed to identify and control the spread of disease utilizing the 10 Essential Public Health Services framework.

COVID-19 Pandemic Response.

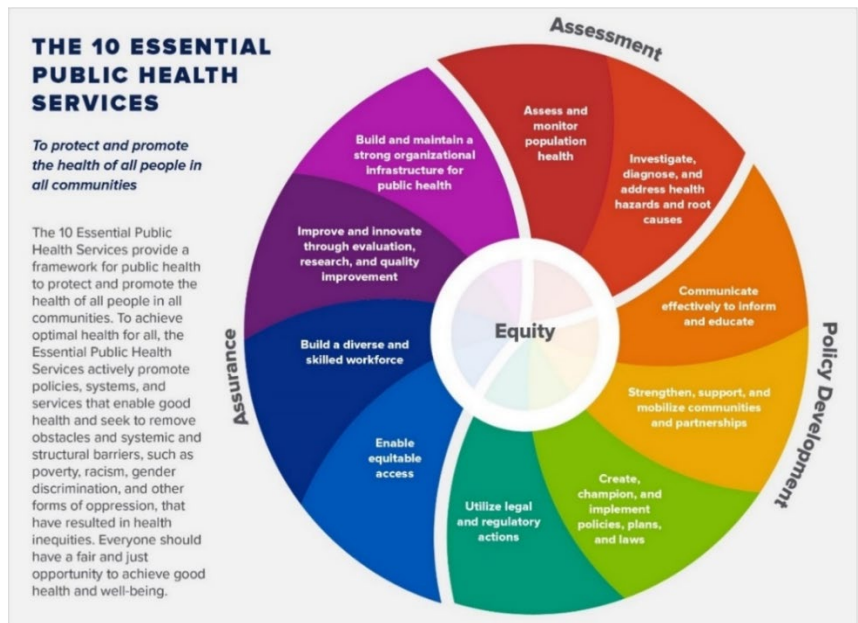
During the last fiscal year, the Environmental Health Division continued in our coordinated response to the COVID-19 pandemic. MEHD staff followed-up on 180 reports of ill Food Workers and Child Care employees

testing positive for COVID-19 and conducted reviews of 122 COVID-19 facility safety plans. In February 2022 the City received several allocations of COVID-19 at home rapid test kits. While the Emergency Management Division of the Milford Fire Department coordinated distributions directly to Milford Residents, the Environmental Health Division worked to deliver supplies of test kits to childcare providers, homebound individuals, public housing, and other at-risk vulnerable residents.

Licensing. The Environmental Health Division oversees licensing and inspections of permanent and temporary food establishments, lodging, public pool and school and childcare facilities. Licensed establishment field work consists of routine inspections, re-inspections, complaint follow up and foodborne illness investigations. Through inspections and licensing, the program focuses to provide owners and their staff with education to maintain safe practices, prevent illness and ensure safety. While regular field work during FY 21/22 continued to be a challenge due to ever fluctuating COVID-19 community transmission rates, Environmental Health Sanitarians conducted 805 inspections of annually licensed food establishments, an increase of 28% over last fiscal year, temporary event licensing and inspection was up 51% as well. In addition, there were 48 plan reviews for new or remodeled food establishments. New establishments require substantially more inspection time for licensing consultation, plan review, onsite visits, and a final pre-inspection.

Troubled housing and hoarding. The collaborative for Residential Integrity of the Disabled and Elderly (CRIDE) continues to serve as an integral part of the city social service network. The Environmental Health Division staff, including a Case Manager and Sanitarians, work as a team to conduct in-home assessments, establish remediation plans, provide support, and make referrals to effectively address the needs of elderly and disabled persons living in troubled housing. As the lead municipal department in these often-complicated cases, the Health Department staff will formulate an appropriate community response involving agencies such as Elderly Protective Services, the Department of Children and Families, Milford Human Services and Probate Court. Although during the pandemic we temporarily paused on our in-person network meetings, during the 21/22 fiscal year the MEHD received 18 new troubled housing cases and was able to maintain a comprehensive team approach while implementing basic COVID-19 safety measures to conduct in-home assessments.

The table on the next page shows routine work activities during the fiscal year in the Environmental Health Division.



WHAT WE DO BY THE NUMBERS		
Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic Response:	FY 20/21	FY 21/22
Food Establishment – COVID-19 Employee Illness Investigation	106	71
Public Health Facility – COVID-19 Employee Illness Investigation	74	109
Public Health Facilities - COVID-19 Safety Plan Review	157	122
Vaccination Clinic's - (MEHD Provides Logistical Support for Clinic Operations)	124	25
Food Protection Program:		
Annual Licenses Issued	378	366
Routine Inspections	576	805
Plan Review for new or remodeled establishments	57	48
Temporary Event Licenses Issued	94	207
Temporary Event Food Vendor Inspections	94	193
Legal Orders/Notice of Violation issued	48	98
Environmental Health Complaint Investigations:	398	403
Air Quality	46	20
Asbestos	3	0
Blight	105	88
Environmental Hazards	12	6
Food-borne Illness (Complaints, outbreak investigations)	6	7
Food Protection	25	26
Housing	76	73
Public Health Nuisance/General	81	85
Salons (Hair, tattoo, nail, massage)	3	6
Sewage	9	6
Vectors (Mosquitoes, bed bugs, rabies, vermin, rodents, etc.)	32	37
Legal Orders/Notice of Violation issued	31	49
Land Use:		
Planning & Zoning project reviews	5	7
Subsurface sewage disposal (soil testing/ new and repair permits)	15	8
Building addition reviews/approvals for homes served by septic systems	15	14
Septic system abandonment inspections	34	20
Beach Monitoring:		
Samples collected	307	263
Complaint investigations/Sanitary survey	36	21
Public Swimming Pool Operation and Inspection:		
Inspections	31	31
Lodging (Hotels/Motels):		
Annual permits issued	17	18
Routine Inspections	18	25
Schools & Daycare Centers:		
Childcare Center Inspections	17	19
Private School Inspections	3	3
In home Environmental Assessments:		
Healthy Homes Assessment	8	11
Collaborative for Residential Integrity for the Disabled and Elderly (C.R.I.D.E.)		
New troubled housing cases	12	18
On-going cases	17	8
Closed cases	6	15
Other Activities:		
Tick specimen delivery to CT Agricultural Experiment Station and resident follow-up	102	124
Assistance to Fire, Police & State Agencies	18	16
Freedom of Information Requests (property & establishment record reviews)	314	310

Public Health Nursing & School Health Services

Immunization Clinics. The Milford Health Department continues to provide monthly Immunization Clinics for the residents of Milford. The immunization clinics at the Milford Health Department are typically held on the second Tuesday of the month from 2:30 – 4:30 pm. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, the monthly clinic location has been altered in response to our community transmission rate of disease. Drive through clinics and alternate sites have been utilized this past year, most recently at 336 Sub Way, as we continue to be committed to offer vaccine to residents in need. Routine immunizations to prevent communicable disease are available for both children and adults. The Milford Health Department is a provider of the *Vaccine for Children* program. This program ensures all children in Milford and throughout the state get the vaccinations they need at no cost to stay healthy. In addition, the Milford Health Department utilizes the Connecticut State Department of Public Health's CT WiZ immunization tracking program. This program enables providers to maintain complete, accurate, and secure immunization records for all children in CT. The Milford Health Department reviews previous vaccination data on children at our clinic as a method ensure that each child is getting the required and necessary vaccinations. Immunizations given at the Milford Health Department are then entered in the CT WiZ database which will allow the child's primary medical provider to see the most up to date information on the vaccination status of their clients.

The Health Department also participates in the Connecticut State Department of Public Health "Cocoon Program". Public health officials recommend pertussis (whooping cough) vaccination for all persons who have close contact with infants. Research has shown that infants with pertussis are often infected by their parents, particularly their mothers, at least half of the time. The Tdap vaccine is available free of charge for new parents, grandparents, and other caregivers of infants under one year of age. This strategy is known as "cocooning" thereby forming a "cocoon" of protection against pertussis. The Milford Health Department administered 14 doses of Tdap this year.

Sixty children received at least one vaccination (excluding COVID-19, influenza, and TB testing) through the Milford Health Department this year, and 25 adults also received immunizations (excluding COVID-19, influenza, TB testing and Cocoon Program). In addition, the Milford Health Department offers prophylactic rabies vaccination to local veterinary providers for any new employee needing such vaccination. The MHD administered 11 doses of prophylactic rabies vaccine this year.

Seasonal Influenza Vaccination Program. The seasonal influenza vaccine program was successfully implemented, with 609 doses of the influenza vaccine administered to residents and employees in Milford. The Milford Health Department offered a variety of settings for residents and employees of the city and Milford Board of Education to receive their annual influenza vaccination. Clinics were held at the Milford Senior Center, Milford Public Library, Johnathan Law High School, and at 336 Sub Way.

The Health Department continues to provide a high dose influenza vaccine, Fluzone, which is recommended for individuals over 65 years of age. Fluzone was offered at the Senior Center clinics and all community clinics. The Health Department administered 100 doses of high dose flu vaccine this season. Flu vaccinations (regular and high dose) were also administered to 122 City employees and 254 Board of Education employees. Community education regarding the importance of receiving an annual influenza vaccine continues to be an important aspect of the Milford Health Department Influenza prevention program.

Influenza Like Illness/COVID Like Illness Surveillance. Following the H1N1 pandemic of 2009-10, and now with the COVID-19 pandemic, the Health Department has continued to monitor our school population for evidence of influenza like-illness (ILI) as well as COVID-19 like-illness (CLI) throughout the school year. The school nurses utilize a daily monitoring system and can clinically survey illness patterns on a consistent basis. Due to the invaluable information that the ILI/CLI monitoring protocols provide, we will continue this surveillance activity in the year ahead.

School Health Services-Public Health Nursing. The Milford Public Health Nurses continued to provide school nursing services in 14 public (Milford Public Schools) and 2 private schools (Academy of Our Lady of Mercy-Laurelton Hall and St. Mary's School) for approximately 6,000 students in grades Pre-K through grade 12 and post graduate programs. Dr. Andrew Carlson continues to serve as the school/community medical advisor.

The goal of school nursing is to have children in school, in class and ready to learn; to that end, the Milford school nurses report that between 75 – 100 % of students return to class within 30 minutes of visiting the health office, being assessed, and treated by the school nurse. During this past school year, the school nurses had 37,694 health office visits for injury/illness or other health management issues, in addition to any case management follow up that was required.

There are many students in Milford who have a health condition that requires health management by the school nurse to ensure a safe environment for the student. Many of these children require special treatments or procedures to be done during the school day. These procedures may include gastrointestinal tube feedings for students unable to swallow, blood glucose monitoring for diabetic students, respiratory management for asthmatic students or those children unable to cough or clear respiratory secretions by themselves. During this past year, the Milford school nurses administered over 11,000 medications, procedures, or treatments.

Mandated health screenings (vision, hearing, posture) are conducted at designated grade levels each year to check for abnormalities. These health screenings are also conducted at the request of a parent or teacher. The Milford school nurses performed over 10,000 health screenings during the 2021-2022 school year and referrals were made to the appropriate provider if an abnormality was noted.

The Milford Public School nurses administer emergency care to staff and visitors of the school buildings. They are all trained in the Incident Command System and are ready to assist if needed with emergency shelters, warming centers, and mass vaccination clinics for the City of Milford.

School Health Services – Oral Health Program. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated risk, the school oral health program is suspended at this time.

Bloodborne Pathogen Training. The Milford Health Department annually reviews the *City of Milford Exposure Control Plan and Bloodborne Pathogen Protocol* and makes revisions as necessary. The Director of Nursing provides Bloodborne Pathogen Training to City of Milford employees as requested by department heads throughout the year. The training involves reviewing important aspects of the City of Milford's Bloodborne Pathogen Policy, including the guidelines for exposure control measures and post exposure protocol. This training is provided to eliminate or minimize occupational exposure to bloodborne pathogens in accordance with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration Standards. In addition, Bloodborne Pathogen Training is provided to all Milford school staff and administrators at their assigned schools.

COVID-19 Response. Since the first COVID-19 positive case was identified in Milford on March 16, 2020, the Milford Public Health Nursing team and Milford Health Department contact tracers have assisted the Milford Health Department's response efforts by contacting the positive COVID-19 cases in our Milford community/schools and their close contacts, informing them of the appropriate recommendations on care, treatment, isolation/quarantine procedures and environmental cleaning. From July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022, there were 11,671 Milford residents identified as having positive (laboratory-confirmed) COVID-19 disease. During that same time, Milford was saddened by the loss of 21 of its residents to COVID-19 disease.

Beginning on December 23, 2020, the Milford Health Department began a strong and steady vaccination effort against COVID-19 in our Milford community. This initiative continued as 25 COVID-19 clinics were held from 7/01/21 through 6/30/2022. The MHD, with the assistance of the Public Health Nurses and medical volunteer staff, administered 2,194 COVID-19 vaccines to adults (978) and children (1,216). In addition, our Homebound

vaccination campaign continues as the Milford Health Department strives to afford the COVID-19 vaccine to all those requesting the vaccine.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT ANNUAL REPORT TO THE MAYOR 2021-2022
Public Health Nursing & School Health Services
July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022

	Current Year 7/2021 – 6/2022	Previous Year 7/2020 – 6/2021
Immunization Clinics	40	56
COVID-19 Vaccines	2,194	15,032
DTaP	9	1
Hepatitis A	25	7
Hepatitis B	23	10
HIB	2	0
HPV	3	1
Influenza (IMMUNIZATION)	609	862
Mantoux (PPD) Tuberculin Test	133	84
Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR)	16	3
Meningococcal	13	20
Pneumonia Vaccine	1	1
Polio (IPV)	17	4
Rabies	11	0
Tdap	8	22
Tdap (Cocoon Program)	14	2
Varicella Vaccine	12	5

Community Health Division

Disease Surveillance. From July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022, there were 257 cases of disease reported to the Milford Health Department. The attached table the number of cases reported by month (see Table 1), and foodborne illness reports this year (see Table 2). During this same period, there were also 11,671 Milford residents identified as having positive (laboratory-confirmed) COVID-19 disease. The attached tables do not include COVID-19 cases within the reportable diseases total.

Monitoring of food borne illnesses and follow up investigation/education continues to be a core function of the Health Department. There were 32 cases of food borne illness reported this year, with reports of Salmonella being the most prevalent (See Table 2).

Grants Management. The Director of Health and the Community Health Coordinator apply for grants for funding for several projects throughout the year by submitting written applications to various national, state, and local organizations. Both the Director and Community Health Coordinator have written and submitted several grant applications over the past year in addition to applications for funding or continued funding for the grants listed

below. The following is a list of the new or renewed grants that the Health Department has received during this fiscal year:

Grants Management	Amount
Asthma Initiatives	\$51,666
Local Public Health Preparedness Planning	\$28,015
2022 ELC Enhancing Detection Cooperative Agreement	\$234,645
MRC capacity Building	\$3,000
Opioid Overdose (OD2A)	155,080
Per Capita	\$102,666.35
Preventive Health/Healthy Homes Initiative	\$14,444
	Total
	\$589,516.35

Community Health Programs & Projects. This year, the Community Health Coordinator implemented the following health initiatives in partnership with program staff.

- Putting on AIRS (POA)*** This regional home environmental risk assessment program is designed to improve environmental conditions for asthmatic children to decrease asthma-related adverse events. This program is funded by a grant through the CT Department of Public Health, with the Milford Health Department as the lead agency for Asthma Region 6. Participating towns within the region include Branford, East Haven, Hamden, Meriden, Milford, New Haven, North Branford, North Haven, Woodbridge, Wallingford, and West Haven. The program's goal is to improve an individual's asthma control thus decreasing asthma-related adverse events through home-based education regarding environmental triggers, understanding asthma path physiology, medications, and tools (i.e. Asthma Action Plans). Asthma education is typically provided in the home by a public health nurse or asthma educator, a Community Health Worker to provide support to clients with social determinants of health that impact their ability to control their asthma and a sanitarian to assist in eliminating environmental triggers. Visits also includes a 6 month follow up after a participant has been enrolled. COVID-19 has allowed this program to become more accessible through the Doxy.me telehealth platform. The local emergency departments and the medical community continue to be the primary referral source for POA. The Milford Health Department chairs the Greater New Haven Area Asthma Coalition which also held a virtual meeting this year. At this year's meeting we provided attendees with a reintroduction to POA and where the program currently stands. Region 6 remains active in several partnerships throughout Greater New Haven that allows clients to be served additional benefits without financial gain from the grant.
- Epidemiology and Lab Capacity Grant.*** The Milford Health Department was provided the Epidemiology and Lab Capacity (ELC) Enhancing Detection Cooperative Agreement funded through the Connecticut Department of Public Health. The goal of this initiative is to provide local health departments resources to address the following efforts in their community: Enhance surveillance (contact tracing), response, informatics, and other workforce capacity, strengthen laboratory testing volume and capacity, coordinate and engage with partners as needed to respond to and prevent COVID-19, and prevent and minimize transmission of COVID-19 along with conducting health promotion activities. This funding has enabled the Milford Health Department to provide the following:
 - Sustain at least two (2) contact tracers during the contract period. Contact tracers have been instrumental for Milford residents when they have tested positive for COVID-19 to assist residents

with understanding their results, next steps in quarantine and/or isolation, limiting exposure to others and connecting them to resources when needed.

- Implement and sustain the homebound COVID-19 vaccination program for Milford residents with the addition of a COVID-19 Clinical Coordinator. The Clinical Coordinator has conducted home visits to homebound residents who are defined as being limited to the confinements of their home, to receive COVID-19 vaccination. During this time homebound residents received fourteen (14) initial doses, twenty-two (22) second doses and forty-seven (47) booster doses of the COVID-19 vaccine. We are looking forward to exploring the possibility of expanding this program in the Fall to also provide homebound residents the influenza vaccine. We expect to enhance effectiveness and efficiency of our local vaccination programs to address access inequalities in the Milford community.
 - We have been able to partner with CT DPH/Griffin Health Vans to host 63 pop up clinics in Milford to increase vaccine access to residents. These efforts allowed for 1,199 adult and 1,006 pediatric individuals to receive COVID-19 vaccinations at these locations.
- ***Overdose Data to Action (OD2A) in Connecticut Communities Grant (OD2A)/ Milford Community Opioid Overdose Response (COOR) Collaborative.*** The Milford Health Department was previously awarded the Overdose Data to Action (OD2A) grant through the CT Department of Public Health for two years. The grant was awarded to reduce drug overdoses and overdose deaths of Milford residents. DPH announced, that this funding will be extended an additional year. We will continue to assist in obtaining high quality, more comprehensive, and timely data on overdose morbidity and mortality and using this data to inform prevention and response efforts. Through this initiative, the Milford Community Opioid Overdose Response (COOR) Collaborative formed. The COOR is a multi-stakeholder collaborative that works to align and de-duplicate community efforts for prevention and treatment of Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) and Substance Use Disorder (SUD). These efforts can move forward through leveraging data from various sources, such as the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner and the CT Department of Public Health (DPH). This year the COOR assisted in the development of a data to action roadmap that focuses on whole person care for someone suffering with OUD and/or SUD. This roadmap is currently being assessed and compared to the needs assessment conducted in late 2019 to ensure the needs of the community are being met with the roadmap. The COOR also anticipates developing a sustainable model of collaboration that will leverage these and other data for a more unified response to OUD and SUD that best serves the citizens of Milford.

Public Health Accreditation Board. The Milford Health Department foresees to applying to become an accredited health department through the Public Health Accreditation Board. Voluntary national public health accreditation enables us to improve our quality, services and better meet the needs of our community. In order to apply, we must complete three core tasks: A Community Health Assessment (CHA), Community Health Improvement Plan (CHIP) and a Strategic Plan. Our Strategic Plan is complete and will help guide the work we do that will assist in improving health and wellness in the Milford community for the next 3-5 years. The Health Department collaborated with other agencies and local communities to complete the CHA and CHIP activities and strategies for the goals of 2022. Due to COVID 19, the MHD documented and added new strategies and priorities to demonstrate additional work conducted in response to COVID 19. These efforts include but are not limited to conducting COVID 19 vaccination clinics along with an access to care work group with the focus of food insecurity in the community. The MHD currently collaborates with the Health Improvement Alliance (HIA) to create action steps that will be implemented for the 2023- 2025 CHA and CHIP plans to continuously move towards accreditation.

Table 1. 2021-2022 Number of cases reported by month

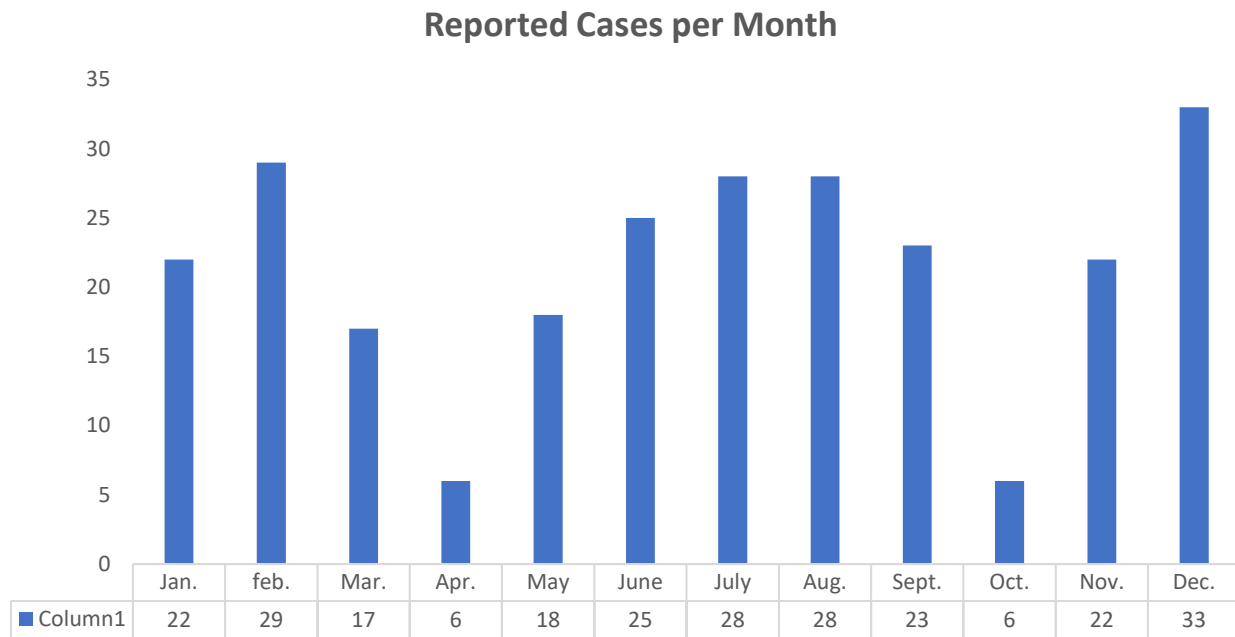
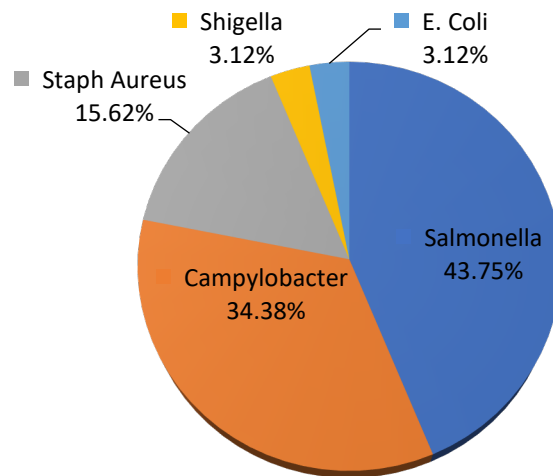


Table 2. 2021-2022 Food borne Illness Reports



Division of Public Health Emergency Preparedness & Response

COVID-19 Response & Recovery. The Milford Health Department (MHD) continuously plans for and adapts to ongoing and emerging public health threats. The COVID-19 pandemic has been the focus of planning and response

in partnership with the City of Milford's emergency response agencies, under a Unified Command structure. MHD remains dedicated to COVID-19 response and recovery efforts, in addition to continuity of the *10 Essential Public Health Services* to the Milford community.

Efforts to meet the demand of effective COVID-19 response require contributions from all divisions of the Milford Health Department. COVID-19 response crossed all 6 domains of the *15 Public Health Emergency Preparedness & Response Capabilities*. Identified strengths and area of improvement are documented in an After-Action Report (AAR) with the purpose of guiding response moving forward. Health department response continued to be guided by the Governor's Executive Orders. For 2021-2022, MHD continued response roles in public information & health education, enforcement of Governor's Sector Rules, response to community & industry inquiry on cleaning & disinfecting guidelines, COVID-19 case contact tracing, epidemiological investigation & outbreak cluster investigation, personal protective equipment (PPE) inventory management & distribution to local health care providers and community groups, ensuring access to testing, and mass distribution of COVID-19 vaccine and community commodities.

The U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) Emergency Use Authorization for COVID-19 vaccines continues to expand. MHD currently provides all available approved vaccines against COVID-19. To continue mass vaccine distribution operations, MHD relocated the community Point of Vaccination (POV) to a leased commercial building at 336 Sub Way. MHD with support from Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) & Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteers have vaccinated approximately 16,950 individuals against COVID-19, to date.

Clinic operations pose an incredible time demand on staff due to the clinic hours and the need to staff health department headquarters simultaneously with an offsite clinic. Milford's clinic staffing breakdown includes the Director of Health- designated as Incident Commander, Public Information Officer and POD/Point of Vaccination (POV) Manager, Director of Nursing as clinic operations and clinical lead, Community Health Coordinator and Administrative staff as electronic system data management and clinic check-in staff, Environmental Health Chief & Registered Sanitarians as logistics, responsible for clinic set up, breakdown, providing medical and non-medical supplies, staff & volunteer breakroom management and supply, and handling issues with clinic attendees as needed. Milford Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) and Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) volunteers have contributed over 3,000 hours, working as expeditors, medical screeners, IT support for attendees, medical volunteer vaccinators and overseeing the post-vaccination medical observation area. Milford currently has over 175 MRC and/or CERT volunteers registered.

Additional efforts to improve vaccine availability included MHD working with the State DPH mobile vans to set up clinics to increase vaccine availability where gaps were identified and Milford's homebound registry in partnership with the state and Milford Senior Center.

Division of Public Health Emergency Preparedness & Response. MHD maintains an All-Hazards Emergency Operations Plan. This is a living document with operational annexes for emergency response including Continuity of Operations/Essential Services, Mass Dispensing & Vaccination, Environmental Emergency Response, Risk Communications, Respiratory Protection, Pandemic Influenza Response, Ebola Virus Disease/Emerging Infectious Disease (HIP/EID) Protocol, and Region 2 High Impact Pathogen & Emerging Infectious Disease Plan. An Emerging Infectious Disease, COVID-19 specific protocol was developed based on the public health response to the virus in the United States.

The MHD Environmental Emergency Response Plan is an all-encompassing operational guide to the Environmental Division emergency protocols and constitutes a significant percentage of the health department's routine emergency response activations. Environmental response situations include all chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and/or explosive (CBRNE) incidents. In addition to environmental threats such as unsafe housing, power outages, water, air and/or ground contamination related, MHD responds to reports of unknown agents, potential hazardous

materials, and white powder. MHD typically responds to at least one white powder or CBRNE incident a year. MHD maintains a *White Powder Protocol* in coordination with Milford Police, Milford Fire/Emergency Management, CT Department of Energy & Environmental Protection (CT DEEP) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). This protocol is an annex to the Health Department's Environmental Emergency Response Plan.

Milford is a regional planning and response partner in CT Department of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (CT DEMHS) Region 2/New Haven County. Regional meetings of Emergency Support Function (ESF) 8, Public Health & Medical for DEMHS Region 2 address response gaps from town to town. MHD's Director of Health leads the Region 2 meetings in coordination with a New Haven County acute care hospital system representative. Meetings are attended by representatives from local health departments, emergency management/fire departments, hospitals, emergency medical services (EMS) as well as additional emergency response and healthcare partners.

Emergency Planning Moving Forward. The Health Department consists of multiple divisions comprised of 11 full time, 4 part time staff, and 20 school nurses stationed at the public & private schools. MHD core staff and school nurses have training in the National Incident Management System (NIMS) Incident Command System (ICS) and are required to participate in all scheduled emergency preparedness drills, exercises, and training. Plan review and updates, trained, prepared staff, and drills and exercises gave Milford a compass in responding to COVID-19 and established a baseline level of preparedness. MHD will continue to focus on maintenance and improvement planning of emergency response plans, sustaining a robust training plan for staff and volunteers, and continue to engage with health and medical agencies involved in public health emergency response.

Staff members of the health department participate on diverse local and regional emergency planning and preparedness specialty committees. These include Local Emergency Management meetings, Hazard Mitigation Committee, School Safety and Security Committee, individual school Safety and Security meetings and the General Government Safety Committee focusing on responder (employee) safety and health. Planning partners include the four tiers of Emergency Support Function (ESF) 8, the local health department, local and state Emergency Management/fire, acute care hospitals, and Emergency Medical Service (EMS) providers.

Milford Department of Human Services

The Milford Department of Human Services was no exception to the rule this year of being faced with many challenges relative to the COVID-19 pandemic and, specifically, recovery activities. Despite the challenges, DHS staff has risen to the challenge and successfully assisted many residents with routine Human Services needs, as well as needs specific to the impact of COVID-19 on many of our most vulnerable residents.

Outreach Appointment Services. The Outreach staff at DHS provides case management services to Milford residents requesting assistance. Community Outreach Workers evaluate and assess the immediate needs and concerns of residents and help obtain access to local, state, and federal programs. The Outreach Workers work closely with local agencies, service providers, clergy association and civic organizations to coordinate financial assistance. The assistance ranges from food insecurities, rental and mortgage assistance, utilities/oil assistance, housing and utility counseling, medical insurance counseling, financial budget counseling, 211 CAN System referrals (homelessness), diapers, summer camp assistance and other miscellaneous requests. During the last fiscal year, DHS conducted **230** separate outreach assessments totaling **484** Milford residents. As a result of those **230** appointments, **\$90,353.43** of assistance was provided from DHS and outside funding sources. The overall objective of DHS is to serve and support families and individuals toward the goal of self-sufficiency. The administrative shifts at DHS have afforded the opportunity to provide more quality comprehensive case management and allowed for more time spent with Milford families in need of outreach assistance.

Energy Assistance. The Connecticut Energy Assistance Program (CEAP) is designed to help offset the winter heating costs of Connecticut's lower income households, specifically those households whose income falls at or below 60 percent of the state median income. CEAP is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) Block Grant, which is then administered by the Department of Social Services and filtered down through the Community Action Agencies of the State of Connecticut. CEAP is an income and asset eligible program which legislation votes on yearly. The Department of Human Services of the City of Milford is an intake site for TEAM Inc, the Community Action Agency located in Derby, CT which covers Milford residents. This year we were able to continue our partnership with TEAM, Inc. With the arrival of COVID-19, DHS was closed to the public and the Energy Assistance process transitioned to a phone and/or electronic system. Individuals who required in-person intakes were seen at TEAM, Inc. in Derby. This partnership continues to be a great success. Within the last program year DHS accepted **192** applications with **166** of them being approved (86% approval rating) providing **\$163,400** to Milford residents to supplement their main heating costs. In addition to complete applications taken at our office, DHS staff assisted with coordination and paperwork completion for **687** additional applications for Milford residents who had their initial appointment at the TEAM, Inc. offices in Derby and/or through telephone interview, with approximately 83% of those applications being approved providing **\$672,695** in heating assistance. In the next fiscal year, DHS staff will review the outcomes of this year's program to make any additional changes to continue to improve our abilities to meet the emergent needs of residents.

Renters' Rebate. This program administered by the CT Office of Policy & Management is targeted towards Connecticut renters who are elderly (65+) or, if under 65, are receiving or eligible for Social Security Disability benefits. Persons renting a home, apartment or room, or living in cooperative housing, a mobile home, or within a nursing home may be eligible for this program. Renters' rebates can be up to \$900 for married couples and \$700 for single persons per program year. The renters' rebate amount is based on a graduated income scale and the amount of rent and utility payments made in the calendar year prior to the year in which the renter applies. Applications are taken at DHS between May 1st and October 1st. During the last program year DHS took **385** applications in which **374** were approved (97% approval rating) and provided **\$200,123.00** in rent rebates.

Dollar Energy Fund provides **grants** to households facing an immediate utility crisis and funding is applied directly to their Regional Water Authority account to prevent a termination or to restore their service. Grants are in the amount of **\$175** and can be applied annually. To date, we have processed **78** applications which **72** have been approved. This totals **\$12,600.00** in grants distributed from **10/1/21 to 6/30/22**.

Community Development Block Grant. DHS applied and was granted a total of **\$14,000** (PY47) in Rent/Mortgage Assistance this fiscal year. The Outreach staff is currently using the funds to assist Milford residents with temporary financial hardships and with eviction prevention. Considering the COVID-19 pandemic, DHS has applied for additional CDBG-Coronavirus funding to assist with emergency utility assistance requests for residents impacted by COVID-19. DHS received this in the amount of **\$15,000** (PY45-CV3).

Emergency Food and Shelter Grant Program. This federal grant is administered and approved through the United Way of Greater New Haven. DHS applied and received funding for Phase 37 and was awarded **\$12,025.00**. Additionally, DHS applied for CARES act funding and was granted **\$21,000**. Following the Phase 37 and CARES application, DHS was also awarded Phase 38 funds. This funding continues to be a tremendous victory for our department given the fiscal environment and competition among grant applicants. Milford residents are vetted through Outreach appointments and funding is allocated as needed.

Thanksgiving Food Basket Program. This program provides Milford families that are identified in need with a Thanksgiving Meal. DHS Outreach Clinicians coordinate with organizations including the Boy Scouts, Women's Inc., Lions Club, Knights of Columbus, Milford Hospital, several churches, and private citizens to provide these meals directly to the doorstep of identified Milford families. The families are identified through coordination with

Milford Public Schools, local churches, the United Way, Salvation Army Service Unit of Milford, Beth El Shelter, and current DHS families seeking services and outreach to the community. DHS staff compiles the lists of families and directly provides each list to the service organizations. The meals are prepared and delivered by the outside organization. During the 2021 Thanksgiving season, DHS facilitated **417** Milford families with receiving a full Thanksgiving meal totaling **1,030** people within those families. DHS is continuing its objective of streamlining food services all over the city by fostering relationships with those organizations that provide the assistance. We have been able to continually put out our message of eliminating duplication and having consistent coordination among organizations to make the delivery of food services more efficient.

Winter Holiday Food Basket Program. Each year DHS partners with a local civic organization to provide holiday meals to Milford residents in need. Families are identified throughout the year stemming from outreach appointments, Energy Assistance (EA) and Renters' Rebate (RR) programs. The Winter Holiday Meal Basket program is a partnership between the Milford Elks Club and DHS. The Elks Club is responsible for delivering the baskets. The 2021 program delivered baskets to **106** Milford households providing food for the holiday for **219** residents in total. In addition, **5** families also received live donated Christmas Trees on behalf of St. Mary's School.

Adopt-A-Family Program. This program is run during the winter holiday season and enables Milford families in need to experience the joy of the holiday season. DHS coordinates with City Departments, Milford business owners, private citizens, local faith-based organizations, and civic organizations in matching families given their level of need. A large focus of the program is to promote family togetherness while fulfilling each family member's needs and wants. DHS Outreach Workers determine each family and individual child's needs and "wish lists" and then provides a list to the donor keeping the family completely anonymous. The donors then drop off the items and DHS staff arranges the pickup with the families prior to the holiday. In addition, in the case of a family being unable to be adopted, DHS provides gift cards which are provided by a local church to the remaining identified families. During the 2021 Program, DHS assisted **69** Milford families totaling **245** residents. Gift cards were also distributed to **20** families totaling **57** residents in the amount of **\$2,178.00**.

Spring Holiday Gift Card Program. This year DHS was able to provide gift cards to individuals and families in need for the spring holiday. These funds were supplied by the United Way of Milford and St. Mary's Church as well as Napoli's. This year **109** Milford Residents were provided **\$1,575.00** in gift cards.

Camp Happiness Scholarship. DHS facilitates scholarships through the Milford Recreation Department for Camp Happiness, which is designed for special needs children from ages 4-12. The camp scholarship fund is donation based and given out yearly to Milford families identified as in need. Each applicant is required to fill out a scholarship application with verification of financial need. DHS Outreach staff and a representative from the Recreation Department then meet collectively to discuss the applicants and level of need is determined. During the 2021 Camp year, there was no camp scholarships due to COVID.

COVID-19 Response & Recovery. In response to COVID-19, DHS staff ensured continuity of operations to meet the needs of Milford's most vulnerable residents. As the months progressed, the Department saw a significant increase in requests not only from existing clients, but also from residents who have never accessed social services within the community. This increase in requests was a direct result of the impact of COVID-19—either as a result of residents not being able to work due to illness and/or residents who were laid off and/or lost significant income as a result of the COVID-19. Of the **230** outreach appointments discussed previously, **35** families requested assistance as a direct impact of COVID-19. Assistance was provided for emergency lodging, rent & mortgage assistance, utility assistance, and emergency food vouchers.

UniteCT is a new Emergency Rental Assistance Program that has been created as the result of COVID-19 from the Department of Housing. Through this program, tenants that have been affected by COVID-19 and meet income guidelines can be eligible for up to \$15,000 in rental assistance and up to \$1,500.00 in electric utility assistance. This program began in March 2021 and to-date, we have had five people apply. This is a lengthy process but, with

great benefit. All the six applicants were awarded in rent and utilities. For the rent, total of **\$43,500.00** was distributed and for utilities, **\$3,401.88**. Additional Milford residents received assistance through Unite CT who applied directly to the program without assistance from DHS.

Milford Youth and Family Services (MYFS)

MYFS continues to serve as a resource to families and community partners through the promotion of positive youth development, family programming and supportive services. A primary goal of the agency moving forward is to focus on developing innovative and collaborative solutions to issues impacting youth and families in our community. To this end, MYFS coordinated the following programs:

- The ***Milford Juvenile Diversion Program*** is a partnership between MYFS, the Milford Police Department and the Milford Fire Department. The program consists of approximately five weekly meetings with young people and their parents. Each lesson focuses on fire safety, juvenile law, consequences of actions, healthy decision-making, and community involvement. Upon successful completion of the program each young person is “diverted” from the juvenile justice system. Two (2) families completed the program successfully this fiscal year.
- The ***Rent-a-Kid Program*** continues to provide Milford youth with the opportunity to earn money while learning valuable life skills such as responsibility, communication, and time management. The program also aims to address the needs of Milford residents looking for help with household tasks such as snow removal, babysitting and yard work. The Rent-a-Kid program continued to run on a limited outdoor capacity this year although several young people did provide yard and snow removal assistance.
- The ***Mayor’s Youth Award*** continues to be a much-anticipated event focused on acknowledging the outstanding volunteer efforts of Milford youth throughout the community. This year two hundred thirty-three (233) young people were honored for their activities to improve the quality of life for everyone in Milford. These students were nominated for the award by parents, teachers, area churches and after-school programs. We were very pleased to again hold the ceremony at the Parsons Government Center Auditorium. The ceremony was recorded and available for viewing on the Milford City Hall Facebook page, MGAT and the Milford Youth & Family Services website.
- MYFS, in collaboration with the Milford Salvation Army Service Unit, continues to partner with the Downtown Milford Farmers Market and the Walnut Beach Farmers Market, to provide vouchers that would enable all families to have access to fresh fruits and vegetables. During the 2021 market season, approximately one hundred fifty-six (156) vouchers were distributed. The markets followed approved COVID-19 social distancing procedures and provided specific “Senior Stroll” hours so that our senior residents could shop safely. In addition, MYFS partnered with Bridgeport Hospital Milford campus to offer ninety-five (95) vouchers for the hospital farm stand throughout the summer.
- The ***Back-to-School Backpack Program*** is a partnership between MYFS, the Salvation Army Milford Service Unit, local churches, and Bridgeport Hospital Milford Campus. Our goal is to provide backpacks filled with school supplies as well as a gift card for clothes/shoes to Milford students whose families are facing financial hardship. MYFS works closely with Milford Public Schools and other agencies to identify

these families. This year MYFS held a drive-through backpack pick-up event for families, distributing approximately one hundred seventy-two (172) bags to students in grades K-12.

The Department of Human Services continues to work in close partnership with the Beth-El Shelter and other agencies to address the issue of homelessness in our community through the Homeless and Unsheltered MultiAgency Network (HUMAN). Together we are working to identify specific solutions and promote change around homelessness, food insecurity, fair rent and mental health services and prevention. This partnership has supported the agency's goal of assisting our clients to secure safe, affordable housing through collaboration on programs such as the 211 CAN Assessment, Beth-El's Outreach & Engagement Program, and the UniteCT Emergency Rental Assistance program. This past year has seen a marked increase in the incidence of panhandling and homeless individuals seeking shelter and services in Milford. Through our "Have a Heart Give Smart Campaign" and increased collaboration with the Beth-El outreach team and 211 housing resources we continue to work towards addressing these complex housing cases.

MYFS continues to partner with the Yale Behavioral Health Task Force, the Milford Clergy Association, and other community agencies to develop resources that foster nutrition security, resilience, and food justice. The Program Coordinator and the Milford Health Department Community Health Coordinator have worked closely to develop a Food Assistance Resource Guide specific to Milford residents that provides up to date information on food pantries, meal delivery programs, and farmers markets. This group has now expanded to focus on issues encompassing Community Health/Healthy Lifestyles. To this end MYFS and MHD partnered to present a series of three Walk N' Talks at Eisenhower Park. Traci Weber of Walk About Yoga, Diane Frankel-Gramelis M.S., and Jennifer Ju M.D., each led these lessons on mindful nutrition, healthy food choices, stress and resilience, and exercise through yoga and walking.

MYFS continues to maintain a strong partnership with other youth serving agencies in the community through the Youth Services Network as well as the Milford Prevention Council, the Central Truancy Team, and the Early Childhood Council. MYFS continues to partner with the Milford Recreation Department to provide additional playground equipment that will enable children to attend the playground camps this summer. MYFS also coordinates the Mattioli Youth Sports Scholarship Program, providing five (5) scholarships to families and enabling their children to participate in sports such as baseball, basketball, and soccer. In addition, the Mattioli Scholarship Program enabled us to purchase thirty-four (34) youth bicycle helmets designated for the Recreation Department's bike rodeo and helmet fitting/safety event. This year MYFS also partnered with the Milford Boys and Girls Club to provide five (5) scholarships for young people to attend one week of camp. Finally, MYFS continued to partner with Bridges Healthcare and Milford Public Schools through funding support for mental health services provided at The Academy. Individual and group therapy services were made available to seven (7) students for whom out-of-pocket costs would otherwise have presented a barrier to services.

A primary goal of MYFS continues to be to bring new programs to the community that will address the changing needs of our youth and their families. To this end MYFS hosted a virtual parenting webinar series entitled "Strong Families Create Strong Minds: A Positive Strategy. Each webinar was designed to address the challenges of parenting in this complex time and offer practical skills to support families and form meaningful community connections. On September 28, 2021, Jenn Ju M.D. presented "*Mindfulness and Other Wellness Strategies to Start Strong*" and on October 19, 2021, Alicia Farrell Ph.D. presented "*Back to the Future: Becoming Stronger Together*". In addition, on April 28, 2022, MYFS hosted a very successful in-person workshop at Bridgeport

Hospital Milford Campus. Diane Frankel-Gramelis M.S. presented *“What Every Girl Needs to Know”* a program for mothers and daughters. Thirty-four (34) mothers and thirty-nine (39) young girls attended.

Finally, as a member of the Milford Collaborative, and in conjunction with Beacon Health Options, MYFS participated in a virtual training and resource fair for all Milford Public Schools staff. This program, “Connecting to Care”, was designed to provide school personnel with information and resources to help them support students and their families. The program received very positive feedback from school staff regarding the comprehensive services available to Milford youth and their families.

Milford Employment and Training

Milford Employment and Training primarily runs the following three major programs, all of which are funded to serve either those who are economically disadvantaged, receive state assistance or have substantial barriers to employment.

- The **Certified Nursing Assistant** program is an 8-week program designed to teach 4-5 classes of 15-25 students at a time. Our classroom is at the Margaret Egan Center. Our clinical training is held at Golden Hill Health Care Pavilion, a long-term care facility, which also gives us feedback on what changes need to be made to our curriculum. Home Care representatives speak in the classroom about giving care at home. 40 hours of job skills are included in the curriculum. The health field is a fast-growing industry and facilities call us looking to hire graduates. Pay ranges from \$14.00/hour to \$17.00/hour for entry level positions, enabling our graduates to make a living wage. We are proud of our reputation for training excellent Nursing Assistants. Unfortunately, we were unable to have a C.N.A. program this year due to residual effects of COVID-19 with finding an instructor, as Registered Nurses are in great demand. However, there is a great demand to hire C.N.A.'s in today's climate. Our contracts have been renewed for the coming year and we anticipate having 3 – 4 classes throughout the year as we have been able to retain an instructor.
- The **Summer Youth Program** receives funding from the State of CT through Workforce Alliance in New Haven which enables 25 - 50 youth per year to enter the program. Milford in-school youth ages 14-21 years old are given the opportunity to have a positive work experience for 6 weeks, 20 hours a week while earning a weekly paycheck. The goals of this program are: (1) To create projects that enhance the community by working with sites such as Milford Senior Center, Milford Board of Education, the Public Works Department and environmental projects as well as providing an increased awareness of their civic responsibility; (2) To reinforce the relationship between skills acquired on the job and what is learned in an educational setting ensuring that youth acquire basic work competencies and discipline; such as completing assignments as directed by their supervisor, reporting to work on time and on a regular basis, good communication skills, a positive attitude as well as working as a team and exercising independent judgement; (3) Maintaining and improving basic skills to continue to demonstrate and encourage youth to complete school. We served 24 youth in our summer and in our year-round program. The year-round program was created last year in collaboration with a Special Education Teacher at the High School. This program ran during the school year and taught Job Skills: How to fill out applications, how to create a resume, research on careers, workplace communication and how to handle difficult situations. This program has been greatly received by students. We have received approval for this program for the coming year. It should be noted that minimum wage has increased to \$14.00 per hour.
- The **Resume Power** program for writing resumes for unemployed and/or underemployed Milford residents has proved to be a great advantage for our residents who do not have the resources to spend on a commercially produced resume. Each year we have updated our skills in resume writing to obtain jobs for our clients. We also provide instruction on the proper way to complete job applications and prepare

clients for job interviews when necessary. The CT Department of Labor, for many years, produced a job listing (a packet that listed various job openings throughout CT) that was very helpful for many people in performing a self-directed job search. The Department of Labor stopped producing this listing. We have seen an increasing number of Milford residents that are over 50 years of age and are computer illiterate. This has required us to begin teaching individuals basic computer skills for this population to be able to apply for employment. We have 3 computer stations available for filling out job applications online that can be used in one-hour increments. During the pandemic many people were unemployed, and we served as a resource to navigate the unemployment system as well as updating and creating resumes for some in anticipation of returning to the workforce.

Milford Employment and Training functions as a source of information about local, state, and federal social service programs and services throughout the area. Staff disseminates information and direct referrals are made whenever possible. Our goal is to provide state-of-the-art training to all people who apply for our programs, be sensitive to their needs and find quality jobs for all we serve.